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THE LIFE OF FAITH

AND

THE LIFE OF SENSE;

OR,

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CHRIST.

BY W. MASON.

THEY WHO ARE CHRIST'S, HAVE CRUCIFIED THE
FLESH, WITH THE AFFECTIONS AND LUSTS. GAL.
V. 24.

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M.DCC.LXXV.

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THE
INEXPEDIENCY
OF
GAMES, SPORTS, &c.

DEAR SIR,

IT ever will be so : while we are cleaving to the Lord with purpose of heart, our souls will prosper, and be in good health ; and our minds will be in holy, spiritual, lively frames : then we shall experience a holy fear of the Lord, a godly jealousy over ourselves, a deep concern for the glory of our dear Saviour, and for the spiritual edification and prosperity of our fellow-christians. Such a spirit and temper breathes through every line of my dear friend's last epistle : I thank you heartily for it, as I was much refreshed by it. The Lord of all grace keep your soul and mine constantly under the lively influence of his word and Spirit, and then I am very sure we shall not be perplexing others (as you complain many do you) by asking, What harm is there in cards, dancing, horse-racing, frequenting the play-house, or any other carnal pleasures and sensual gratifications ? You observe, when at any time you declaim against these things, as not becoming Christians, you are directly asked to point out the harm and unlawfulness of them, and to shew from scripture, where these things are forbidden ; and request my free thoughts upon them. You know, dear Sir, I am a very poor casuist, unskilled in the art of subtle disquisitions and logical distinctions ; and therefore very unfit to give you full satisfaction in these matters : however, wishing to gratify my friend, and to be profitable to others, I would desire to sit down, under the feelings of christianity,

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christianity,

tianity, to suggest some few thoughts on these things, from these three grand sources of knowledge, *observation*, *experience*, and *the word of God*.

Is it asked, What harm is there in these pleasures and gratifications? St. Paul says, "All things (i. e. of such an indifferent nature, as are not expressly forbidden by God's word) are lawful for me; but all things are not expedient: all things are lawful for me, but all things edify not," 1 Cor. x. 23. From hence I would make some experimental observations, in which I would appeal to the generous sentiments of the christian's heart: for to you, my dear friend, as one who knows the love of Christ, I write; and to those who profess to have obtained like precious faith, and joyful knowledge, I would appeal. As to those who are strangers to our most holy faith, and are destitute of the grace of Christ in their hearts, they must and they will have those pleasures and gratifications which are suited to their carnal state and corrupt dispositions. As they are not yet framed by God's grace, nor formed for his glory, they can have no relish for those spiritual joys and pleasures which flow from God's right hand, and which are the joy and glory of all his new-born children in Christ Jesus. It is all vain: it would be only fighting as one who beateth the air, to dissuade them from card-playing, the pleasures of the play-house, or any other carnal diversion. But for those who profess to be believers in and followers of the Lamb of God, what have they to do with these things? And if they are acting in character, and walking consistent with their profession, they will have nothing to do with them; but will consider them as unworthy their pursuit, and as inexpedient to their state. Let us therefore consider them,

1. As things not expedient.

2. As things which edify not.

1. These things are not expedient. Now suppose we were not to insist that they are unlawful, but only as inexpedient

expedient for christians ; that there is nothing in the enjoying them, of the least expediency, aptitude, or fitness, to the state of a christian, as a spiritual man, a new creature in Christ, and a follower of Christ ; we shall see reason enough for avoiding them ; for there is a great beauty in the moral fitness of things, and in considering their natural tendency. Though I hope, before I conclude, to shew also the unlawfulness of these things to a christian.

I. I am fully assured, and will venture boldly to assert, from knowledge and experience, that were you to propose to a soul under its first awakenings to see, and under its first quickenings to feel, its deplorably wretched state and absolutely lost condition as a sinner, and under the pungent sense he has of his want of the blood and righteousness of the Son of God to justify and save him ; I say, were you to propose to such a soul any carnal game, or sensual diversion, he would cry out in a holy indignation, Get ye hence, away with such things ! my senses, feelings, and desires, are exercised upon the most important, because eternal concerns. O how unsuitable are these things to my state ! how unworthy my attention ! What ! when my conscience feels the burden of my sins ; when my soul is pained within me for anguish, and my heart is thirsting after Christ ; can I turn aside, foolishly to kill my time, and wretchedly to dissipate my mind, in pursuit of gratifications for my carnal nature ? Surely, surely, such conduct must betray me to be the most arrant trifler with the truths of God, the salvation of Christ, and the interest of my immortal soul. Were I to shuffle and cut, and deal about kings, queens, and knaves, &c. verily I should think I was shuffling with God, cutting myself off from all hope of being heard when I cry, Lord Jesus, save me, or I perish ; and should deal out to myself nothing but aggravated woes, distress, and anguish. Can such a one as I dance to the viol,

divert my senses at the play-house, or follow the chace, when all within is dejection and dread, when my soul is hunted like a partridge upon the mountains, and when I feel the urgent necessity of giving all diligence to make my calling and election sure? Surely, all carnal games, all sensual diversions, are as inexpedient, as unfit for me, as they would be for a man who is under sentence of death, to die to-morrow: for I feel that I have the sentence of death within me, and I cannot rest till I know that I am passed from death to life, by believing in Jesus. Therefore my spiritual convictions are too strong within me, to suffer a thought of indulging in carnal pleasures. Say now, dear Sir, is not such reasoning and such conduct natural to persons in such a state? I am fully persuaded you, and every one who has ever experienced it, must allow it.

2. But see the christian soul just set at liberty, when he is exulting in the language of the Psalmist, "The Lord hath turned again my captivity: the Lord hath done great things for my soul: he hath filled my mouth with laughter, and my tongue with joy. He hath brought me up also out of the horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings; and he hath put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God." Now, now, my highly-favoured soul, what reward shall I render unto the Lord for all his mercies, to Jesus for his glorious salvation, to the Spirit for his precious comforts? Shall I—What? Shall I say unto my flesh, Now take thine ease, feed on carnal pleasures, drink into all pleasing diversions, be merry at sensual sports and pastimes, take thy fill of what will gratify thy senses, and—but I forbear; I call on you, dear Sir, I throw the gauntlet, I challenge all, every one of your soft pleaders for these vain things, to bring one single instance of a soul thus made happy by Jesus, and happy in Jesus, who will allow the least expediency, aptitude, or fitness,

of any carnal pleasures and sensual diversions to his state and frame of mind ; or will give the least indulgence to them in his very thoughts, much less pursue the enjoyment of them. No, his happy mind is too elated with more noble, more exalted, and more refined pleasures, and therefore cannot but look on it as most inexpedient, to let himself down so low, as to grovel in carnal pleasures and sensual diversions : not more so, than for a man of the most refined reason to seek pleasure and happiness in the most childish diversions.

Paul's reasoning holds good in this case : " When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child : but when I became a man, I put away childish things," 1 Cor. xiii. 11. Just so may every christian say, When I was in my natural state, a child of wrath, I spake as a child of wrath, in behalf of carnal pleasures ; I understood as a child of wrath, that real happiness lay in gratifying myself in them ; I thought as a child of wrath, that there was no higher pleasure than in the enjoyment of sensual diversions ; but when I became a man, a spiritual man in Christ, I put away these childish things, as unfit and inexpedient for my soul's state and prosperity. Indeed, my dear Sir, a real christian in a right frame of mind, under the lively views of faith, the warm sense of Christ's love, and the joyful prospect of hope, would just as soon ask, What harm is there in such a game ? what evil in such a diversion ? what hurt in pursuing such pleasures ? as a man of fine sense and exalted genius would ask, What harm, hurt, or evil is there in my dandling a jointed doll, or in playing with children at chuck-farthing, push-pin, or bob-cherry ? No, he would be ashamed to plead so silly a cause ; and much more so to pursue such trifling diversions.

3. See the christian somewhat advanced in the divine life. View him, not as a babe, but as a young man in Christ : not as a novice, or one newly come to the faith

of Christ ; but as well knowing the voice of Christ, and attentive to the word of Christ, FOLLOW ME. Did he, when under the sense of guilt, the terrors of the law, and the dread of wrath, see the utter inexpediency of these things, and avoid them ? Did he, in the day of his espousals to Jesus, when his heart was fired with the love of Christ, and warm with love to Christ, judge all carnal pleasures and sensual diversions unworthy of his attention, and too low for his regard and pursuit ? and can he, now he is grown more up into Christ, see any expediency and aptitude in these things to his state ? What ! the more he knows of precious Christ, his endearing offices, his glorious salvation, his loving words, and gracious promises, cannot he now find all his happiness in him, and be content with those joys and pleasures which flow from him, but he must seek to the gratification of his carnal senses, to complete his comfort and happiness ?

Will any of your warm pleaders for these things dare to say, that any christian can see a greater aptitude and expediency for them ; or that they are more suited to his state now, as a follower of Christ, than they were when he was first born into Christ ? If any will be hardy enough to say this, he is not worthy of a reply. For christians are called to follow Christ in the regeneration, or in the new state and reformation of things. - If any can prove that carnal diversions, and sensual pleasures, are at all conducive to a christian's following Christ, he shall be my great Apollo, and I will ever hereafter yield him my implicit faith and obedience. And if denying ourselves, taking up our cross and following Christ, be not contrary to indulging ourselves in carnal diversions and sensual pleasures, I should be glad to know what our Lord precisely means when he commands us so to do.

But I would not so advert to the outward word of Christ, as to lose the sight, and forego the sense, of Christ living in our hearts by faith, and our living upon him
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in hope, and following him in love. Now can it be supposed that these graces of faith, hope, and love, can be in lively exercise in that mind which is carried away after the pleasures of sense ; or that the pleasures of sense must not have a natural tendency to draw away the attention of our minds to Christ, weaken our faith in him, deject our hope on him, damp our love to him ; and so consequently prevent our closely following of him ? If we can at all trace the footsteps of our Lord to scenes of pleasure, to gaming-tables, to the hunting down of animals, to footing it at a dance, or any other gratifications of the flesh, then, and not till then, will these things be expedient for us, and we shall be fully justified in the use of them, as followers of him ; for “ he hath left us an example, that we should follow his steps,” 1 Pet. ii. 21. And pray what right has any one to think himself a follower of Christ, who allows himself in those things which are contrary to the example which Christ has set us, and which are by no means expedient for us ?

4. The christian is called to enjoy sweet fellowship with God the Father, and his son Jesus Christ. As this is his highest happiness, it is his duty, and ought to be his constant study, to use all means conducive hereto, and to avoid whatever is contrary to the enjoyment of this. But can serving divers lusts and pleasures be at all expedient to this ? Nay, have they not a direct tendency to interrupt and destroy this ? If any one, after having spent his precious moments in sensual pleasures and carnal diversions, should declare, Well, now I feel my soul happy in God—I have sweet fellowship with him—I find my heart and affections drawn out in loye to him, and have most earnest desires to devote my time, talents, body and soul, to the service and glory of him—what shall we say of such ? Verily, that they have scripture, and the examples of the most eminent saints on their side, by only changing the past into the present tense, and reading Titus

tus iii. 3. thus, "For we ourselves also *are* foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures." But the folly of such is obvious, their disobedience is manifest, and their deception, by their feelings, is evident. For can there be a stronger evidence that a man is an utter stranger to the nature of spiritual joy in God, and fellowship with God, who either thinks they can be at all promoted by carnal pleasures, or are not all prevented by them? Surely, Sir, this is like fetching fire from the heathen altars, or from hell itself, to warm the heart with the love of God; or doing evil that good may come, the consequence of which is awful, Rom. iii. 8. I will positively assert, where spiritual fellowship with God in Christ is in the heart, that person neither can nor will seek fellowship with the unfruitful works of carnal diversions, but will be dead to them; for the life of spiritual joys, will be the death of carnal gratifications. Hear the sentence of the Spirit of truth: "They who live in pleasure, are dead while they live," 1 Tim. v. 6, dead to spiritual fellowship with God, peace from God, joy in God, and love to God. Therefore, let no man deceive us with vain words; for thus saith the Lord, "Behold, all ye who kindle a fire, who compass yourselves about with sparks:" Observe the beauty of the irony and sarcasm,—walk in the light of your fire, and in the sparks that ye have kindled, by warming and heating your animal passions, by your carnal sports, and sensual gratifications; but what shall be the end thereof?—"This shall ye have of mine hand (saith the Lord) ye shall lie down in sorrow," Isa. l. 11. When natural passions subside, when cool reflections take place, when conscience is suffered to speak and bear its faithful testimony, then will ye cry in sorrow, "What fruit have we in those things whereof we are now ashamed? for the end of those things is death," Rom. vi. 21. death to our comforts, and death to our souls' fellowship with God, and enjoyment of God.

5. The life of a christian, is a life of prayer: PRAYING ALWAYS, is his motto. But are games, sports, and plays at all suitable for *him*? Can there be the least aptitude in them to promote the life and spirit of prayer? Nay, have they not a direct contrary tendency, even to dissipate the mind, and expel the power of prayer from the heart? I wish, dear Sir, those who follow and plead for these things, would seriously reflect between God and their own souls, 1st, Before they join in them, whether they have any warrant from scripture to look up in the confidence of hope, and pray in the power of faith, for the blessing of the Lord to be upon them, his presence to be with them, and comfort and joy flow from God to them. 2d. While engaged in their games, sports, and diversions, how their hearts stand affected to prayer? Do they then find it a sweet season for prayer? Are their hearts disposed to pray? Will they then lift up their hearts to God, and say, Lord, thou seest how I am engaged; I have begun this game in thy name; Lord, give me a good hand of cards, and good success that I may win it: or, I am now indulging the lust of the flesh, and gratifying the lust of the eye in this sport or diversion, Lord, help me to enjoy all that pleasure which my corrupt nature can wish for. Such petitions are exactly suited to their engagements; I leave it to their judgment to determine, whether they are the prayers of faith, suitable to the state of a christian, and can be presented in hope. 3d. After they have been engaged in these things, how will they find their minds disposed for prayer, and their hearts affected to a throne of grace? What testimony will conscience bear? Surely, not that they have been walking worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, Col. i. 10. as obedient children, that they have not fashioned themselves according to their former lusts in their ignorance, 1 Pet. i. 14. that their rejoicing is this, the testimony of their consciences, that in simplicity and godly sincerity,

cerity, by the grace of God, they have had their conversation in the world, not following fleshly lusts, nor carnal pleasures. Can then their past conduct inspire boldness in prayer, and fervency to prayer? Nay rather, must not serious reflections on it sink their hearts, deject their spirits, cut off boldness, destroy fervency, make their knees feeble, their hands hang down, and their hearts ashamed before the Lord, being filled with present doubts, fears, and misgivings of soul? But if they can nevertheless persuade themselves, that they are living and walking in the spirit of prayer, the word of God plainly shews that they are under the influence of another spirit.

Lastly, Christians are called to live in the Spirit and walk in the Spirit, and not fulfil the lusts of the flesh. Now, Sir, if any advocates for games and diversions will stand forth and declare, that they are not lusts of the flesh, that to engage in them is not fulfilling the desires of the flesh; but that it may be done perfectly consistent with living in the Spirit, and walking in the Spirit, then I have done: I will frankly own, I have been fighting with shadows, contending about non-entities, and striving against mere trifles, of no moment. Then, we may give up every holy precept in our bibles, renounce the spirit of christianity, and take a full swing in every carnal gratification our corrupt nature can lust after. But the very reverse of all this is true. And though I have hitherto treated these things only as inexpedient for christians, yet I will now be more bold, and positively assert, they are expressly *forbidden* and *unlawful*. Perhaps I may be loudly called upon, When? where? and by whom are they forbidden? how will you prove them unlawful?

They are *forbidden* by the Spirit of truth, in the holy word of God. " This I say then (saith Paul) walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh," Gal. v. 16. and after he had declared, " the works of the flesh are manifest," and enumerated many of the gross

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ones, he adds—*and such like.* Hence must not every divinely taught, spiritual man conclude, that each and every work, which takes its rise from the flesh, is suited to the nature of the flesh, is pursued and enjoyed to gratify his old man, his carnal, corrupt nature, is neither more nor less than a work of the flesh; and as all such works are contrary to the Spirit—to living and walking in the Spirit—in the renewed spirit of his mind—in the spirit of truth, faith, love, prayer, heavenly-mindedness, and holiness, they are forbidden to him, and are to be avoided by him. For, till we get to glory, this will ever be our indispensable duty—“put off, concerning the former conversation, the old man, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts,” Eph. iv. 22. For they are contrary to our spiritual life, spiritual walk, and spiritual prosperity in the faith, love, peace, holiness, and joy of our souls, as new creatures in Christ Jesus, who are daily to be renewed in the spirit of our minds.

In the church of England’s form of Baptism of those of riper years, the person to be baptized professes, in these excellent scripture words,—“to renounce the carnal *desires* of the flesh, so that he will not follow, nor be led by them.” But why? Because they are all contrary to that holy faith he is to be baptized into, to that holy calling to which he is called, to that holy hope he embraces, and to that spiritual life he is to live. For, says Paul,—“they who are Christ’s have crucified the flesh, with its affections and lusts,” Gal. v. 24. Though the flesh or corrupt nature lives in them, yet it is their constant desire and fixed purpose that the flesh shall live a dying life; and therefore they will avoid ministering to its nourishment and strength, by gratifying, indulging, and pampering its affections and lusts, as being contrary to their spiritual life of faith in Christ.

Christians are also expressly commanded—“be not conformed to this world; but be transformed, by the renewing

newing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God," Rom. xii. 2. But following the games, sports, and pastimes of the world, is certainly conforming to the world, and is therefore forbidden by this word. But if professors can and do join company with carnal, unregenerate men, in partaking of their carnal pleasures and sensual delights, surely this is not only conforming to the world, but also giving sad evidence, that instead of their minds being transformed and renewed, they are still corrupt and depraved. And do not such compliances exhibit also a sad proof that they shew no regard to the good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God, which is this—" whatsoever ye do in word or deed, DO ALL in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, to the glory of God the Father," Col. iii. 17. Here, dear Sir, I set my foot. Here I rest this matter. If carnal games, sports, plays, &c. can be begun, carried on, and finished in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, to the glory of God the Father, then let them be pursued with the greatest eagerness, and enjoyed in their fullest extent. For who shall dare to say one word against it?

But they are not only expressly forbidden, but are absolutely *unlawful* also. By what law? Even by the law of faith. If proud boasting is excluded as contrary to the law of faith, so are carnal lusts and sensual gratifications also. For this is the express, the unchangeable law of faith—" whatsoever is not of faith (agreeable to the word and doctrine of faith) is SIN," Rom. xiv. 23.—But all carnal games, sports, and plays, are not of faith—and till it can be proved, that they spring from our most holy faith, are agreeable to the word of faith, and may be enjoyed in the power of faith, I will venture to assert they are SIN; and therefore if sin is unlawful to a christian, so are these things. Whoever follows them, most certainly acts contrary to this word—" as obedient children, not fashion-

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ing yourselves according to your former lusts in your ignorance," 1 Pet. i. 14. For, to fashion ourselves according to our former lusts, is unlawful disobedience to God's word, which we now profess to be the warrant of our faith, and the rule of our life. But this will farther appear by considering,

Secondly, These things edify not.

1. Though it cannot be said, they do not edify, in the knowledge of games, sports, and plays, so that a person may not attain to be a good gamester, an excellent sportsman, and an accomplished judge of plays, &c. but what comfort can this yield in the life of faith, the season of prayer, the time of affliction, the hour of death, and the day of judgment? Is it the least honour, or will it yield the least consolation, to be accounted a gaming, sporting, playhouse-frequenting, revelling christian? Nay, are not all these contrary to the character of a christian? Will any say, these things have the least tendency to edify the christian himself, or to build up others in our most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost, as commanded? Jude 20. They have just as natural a tendency to this, as a nettle has to allay the sting of a bee. Though professors talk like angels of spiritual truths, yet if they allow themselves in these carnal things, they will ever stumble others, and prevent their being profitable to their spiritual edification. Instances of this sadly abound.

2. But, say the followers of, and pleaders for games, plays, &c. we do not pretend that they edify in the christian faith and life; but are for amusement, recreation, and diversion. True, they do indeed *amuse*, so as to draw away the spirit's attention from the one thing needful: so *re-create* the mind, as to form a professor to conform to this evil world, and walk according to the course of it: so *divert* him, as to turn aside the soul from following Christ in the regeneration. Fine amusements, recreations, and diversions truly for *new creatures in Christ*:

Christ ! Following them, makes it fully manifest, that the flesh has the ascendancy over the Spirit, and that no regard is had to this apostolic rule—we ought not to please ourselves. Let every one of us please his neighbour, for his good to edification. For (O most cogent reason !) even Christ pleased not himself, Rom. xv. 2, 3. Is not this one word enough to shame them out of their folly ? O where is real faith in, genuine love of, and holy conformity to our dear Lord and head ! For, in pleasing themselves in these vain, carnal things, they not only act contrary to Christ ; but countenance others in those vain things which minister to the spirit, temper, and life of the flesh, in fulfilling the affections and lusts thereof ; and so please their neighbours who join them, for their evil, to their destruction. Is this the liberty we have in Christ ? Is it not rather the licentiousness of the flesh, and contrary to this express command ?—“use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh ; but by *love* serve one another,” Gal. v.

I3. Again,

3. We are commanded—“Follow after the things wherewith one may edify another,” Rom. xiv. 19. But those who follow after games, &c. allow they have no tendency to spiritual edification of others, that they do not follow them for any such purpose ; yet they will engage in them, plead for them, and ask, What harm is in them ? What ! no harm in indulging a spirit and temper contrary to the commands of the Spirit, to please the flesh ? Is not this to grieve the Spirit, to cause him to withdraw his presence, to with-hold his comforts, and to leave the soul under the guilt of sin and power of lusts, in the bondage of corruption, beset with perplexing doubts, distressing fears, and dejecting anxieties ? Is there no harm in all this ? Has the soul nothing to fear from this ? Surely, if God’s word is the rule of our faith, whoever walks contrary to it, cannot enjoy the comfort

of it, because he sins against the author and object of faith. Once more,

4. As these games, sports, and plays, are not of faith, do not spring from faith, are not agreeable to faith, do not edify in the faith ; but are contrary to the law of faith, so are they also to *love*—for love edifieth, 1 Cor. viii. 1. This is essential to the nature of christian love ; and without this love, though we have all faith, and all knowledge, what are we ? Paul tells us, *Nothing*, 1 Cor. xiii. 2. we are not what we profess to be : we want the main thing, if we have not the love of God in us. In that heart, where the love of God, love to his precious truths and holy ways, and love to the souls of men reigns, there will be an earnest desire and studious delight to edify others in the truth as it is in Jesus, and in following him in the way of holiness ; and a tender regard lest the weak conscience be wounded, or those who are lame turned out of the way. Ah, Sir ! were the heart warm with the love of Christ, it would effectually stop the feet from pursuing these vain things, and silence the tongue from ever pleading for them, and asking what harm is in them ? But because the love of many to Jesus is waxed cold in the heart, these things are so pursued in the life, and they are so unedifying to others, in the things of God.

Nay, so far from edifying, that they stumble and offend weak brethren, and cause the way of truth to be evil spoken of, and yet coolly ask, What harm have I done ? and think they may boldly demand with Paul—“ Why is my liberty judged of another man’s conscience ! ” 1 Cor. x. 29. But Paul never meant to use any liberty as an occasion to the flesh, as contrary to that love which edifieth in the faith, and to the wounding of others. No ; he no more dreamt of a liberty to follow carnal games, sensual sports, theatric revellings, &c. than of a liberty to worship the goddess Diana, to cut off his brethrens ears,

ears, or to set the city of Corinth on fire. For, says he, when ye so sin against your brethren, and wound their weak consciences (awful to think of !) ye sin against Christ whose brethren they are, 1 Cor. viii. 12.

Is it a light matter, then, to sin against precious Christ ? Is there no harm, no evil in this ? But how did they do this ? Only by sitting at an idol's table, and eating meat which had been offered to idols. Now this, tho' quite an indifferent thing in itself, in which there could not be the least evil, yet it gave offence to some who were weak in the faith ; and therefore Paul says, they hereby sinned against them ; and not only so, but sinned against Christ also. Hear, then, the declaration of Paul's loving heart—“ If meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend,” 1 Cor. viii. 13. Here is christian liberty connected with heavenly love. Similar causes ever produce similar effects. This love will ever regulate our liberty for the good of others. And we may be sure, dear Sir, where this warm love lives in the heart, it will form this resolution, and make this declaration : If games, sports, and plays make my brother to offend, I will have nothing to do with them while the world standeth, lest I make my brother to offend.

For, so full of love to others, so deeply concerned for their spiritual edification, and so very jealous lest their soul should be hurt, was Paul, that he asks, “ Who is offended and I burn not ? ” 2 Cor. xi. 29. Such is the sympathizing spirit of a christian : he felt pain, like one who was burnt, if the consciences of others were wounded. Such are the tender feelings of christian love : where these prevail, we shall, for the honour of Christ, the glory of God, and the good of others, study to walk, so as to give none offence, neither to Jew nor Gentile, nor the church of God, 1 Cor. x. 32. we shall “ abstain from all appearance of evil,” 1 Thes. v. 22. “ walk cir-

cumspectly," "redeeming the time," Eph. v. 15, 16. "following the things which are of *good report*," Philip. iv. 8. ever remembering—"we are not our own: for we are bought with a price:" therefore are bound by all the endearing, engaging bonds of the love of Jesus, whose precious blood bought us, to glorify God in our body, and in our spirit, which are God's, 1 Cor. vi. 20.

However weak and ineffectual all I have said on this subject may prove, yet I know the word of God is quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword; and I am persuaded, when the Lord speaks, in the power of his word and Spirit, the sweet consolations of his love to the heart—"I WILL HEAL THEIR BACKSLIDINGS, I WILL LOVE THEM FREELY—professors will then awake from their carnal frames, and arise from their dead formality, and cry out in the power of faith, and transport of love—WHAT HAVE I TO DO ANY MORE WITH IDOLS!

In this believing, loving, holy frame, may your soul and mine live, and be kept by our Lord's power, till he shall come in his glory, that we may triumph everlasting in his salvation, is the earnest prayer of, dear Sir,

Your ever-affectionate servant in Christ,

W. M.

F I N I S.

Journ. of Appl. Geodetic Geoinf. Geodat. u. GPS

M.W.

Литература

